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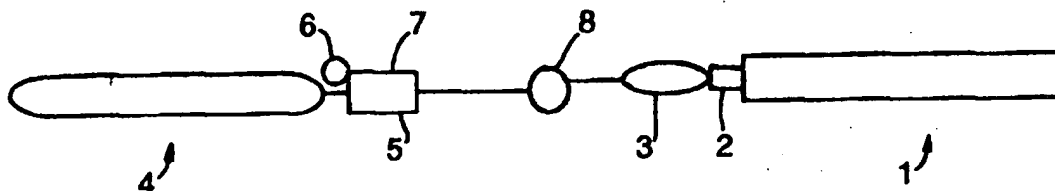
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(71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): CANCER RESEARCH CAMPAIGN TECHNOLOGY LIMITED [GB/GB]; Cambridge House, 6-10 Cambridge Terrace, Regent's Park, London NW1 4JL (GB).		<b>Published</b> <i>With international search report. Before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of the receipt of amendments.</i>	
(72) Inventors; and			
(75) Inventors/Applicants (for US only): BALMAIN, Allan [GB/GB]; 8 Campsie Dene Road, Blanefield, Glasgow G63 9BN (GB). ZHU, Jingde [CN/GB]; 68 Deveron Road, Glasgow G61 1LN (GB).			
(74) Agents: WALTON, Seán, M. et al.; Mewburn Ellis, York House, 23 Kingsway, London WC2B 6HP (GB).			

(54) Title: ANTITUMOUR VECTOR CONSTRUCTS AND METHODS



(57) Abstract

Compositions for targetting expression of a gene such as an antitumor gene may contain a first nucleic acid construct in which expression of a first gene (1) is controlled by a first promoter (2, 3) whose function is suppressed in non-tumour cells, and a second nucleic acid construct in which expression of a second gene (4) for down-regulating the first gene in non-tumour cells is controlled by a second promoter (5, 6) that is up-regulated in non-tumour cells. The second promoter may be regulated by means of p53 binding, targetting expression of the first gene to cells in which p53 down-regulation of expression is disrupted, e.g. cells in which p53 is mutated. The first promoter may be one which is up-regulated in tumour cells, for example the Hsp70 promoter which is up-regulated in mutant p53 tumour cells. A suitable antitumour agent is thymidine kinase, demonstrated using such compositions to provide cell killing action specific for tumour cells as opposed to non-tumour cells.